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ABSTRACT

Vernon Regional Junior College's (VRJC's) incorporation of a reading course in its nursing curriculum is described in this two-part report. The report's first section provides background on VRJC, its facilities, and the factors which led to the implementation of a reading course specifically designed to help students understand nursing textbooks and assignments. The following aspects of the nursing program are then described: credit load requirements, testing procedures, and the four-week, three credit-hour reading course which is offered before the regular nursing program begins. The program's high success rate is noted and several factors contributing to this success are enumerated, such as: (1) cooperation between academic and vocational instructors is highly stressed; (2) the nursing director stresses the benefits of the reading course; (3) the reading instructor is dedicated, flexible, and willing to work with nontraditional students; (4) the instructional deans support the curriculum; (5) students favor the nursing-oriented skills class; and (6) texts and instructional materials are relevant to the nursing courses. The report's second section provides an update on the nursing program, enumerating the changes that have taken place in scheduling, instructional services, and materials. The report is appended by a medical terminology syllabus and a listing of the course requirements for a vocational nursing certificate of completion. (KL)

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READING AND NURSING WORK TOGETHER

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JC 810 523

What do the housewife with grown children, the divorced mother with no previous skill training, the recent high school graduate, the wife who no longer wants to devote herself totally to homemaking, and the nurse's aide who wants a more active role in a helping career, all have in common? Every one of them has entered a vocational nursing program. Not only have they entered, but they have graduated and passed State Boards. Those who were deficient in academic skills upon entry into the program were encouraged to receive help by taking a Reading class designed for nurses which stressed medical terminology, improved comprehension, spelling development and study skills. At what college is nursing and reading so interrelated? Vernon Regional Junior College in Vernon, Texas has instituted the notion whereby vocational students receive academic help in a specialized field of endeavor. The following article will describe how a Reading course at VRJC not only can help vocational students pass a curriculum, but may positively help in changing career choices and life expectations.

Frank Grima graduated with a B.A. from St. Mary's College of California, an MA degree from San Francisco State University and received his life time Reading Specialist certificate from the University of Texas, San Antonio. He has taught reading at Vernon Regional Junior College since 1976.

Edith Roark received her RN from Wichita General Hospital in Wichita Falls, Texas and has done additional study at Texas Woman's University and Wayland Baptist College. She has been nursing director at Vernon Regional Junior College since 1975. Before that she was nursing administrator for 10 years at Foard County Hospital in Crowell, Texas.

Background

Vernon Regional Junior College first opened its doors in 1972. Today, the main campus in Vernon has 548 students, with extension centers in Wichita Falls, and other locales bringing the total student population to 1,172 students. Nursing Schools are located on the main campus in Vernon, the Greenbelt School of Nursing in Crowell and Bethania Hospital in Wichita Falls. The reading lab on the main campus directly serves the nursing students in Vernon and Crowell. A full-time Reading instructor was hired in 1976. It became immediately apparent that nursing students could benefit from classes geared specifically to helping them understand their nursing textbooks and assignments. The Academic Dean was approached and quickly approved. Basically, that was how the present situation evolved. It took a concerned Nursing Director and Reading instructor who got along well with students and each other. There was a desire to improve the progrm and maintain a high level of student retention. In 1978 an Occupational Dean was appointed and has continued to favorably support the program.

Description of the Program

The Vernon program starts a new class each August, while the Greenbelt starts every February. Each student must successfully complete 1,900 hours of classroom instruction in a twelve month period. The curriculum is prescribed by the State Board of Vocational Nursing program. Every student takes the Nelson-Denny Reading Test and the Psychological Services Bureau (PBS) Aptitude for Practical Nursing Examination. The PBS is a battery of five tests - general mental ability, spelling, natural sciences, judgment in practical nursing situations and personal adjustment index. From the results

of these tests and the personal interview, it usually is apparent if a student could benefit from remedial help. A four week class is offered before the regular program commences. This is a three hour credit course. It is not required, but many take it. Ninety-eight per cent have successfully taken the reading course, completed the program and pass State Boards since the program's inception.

Analysis of the Program

Many nursing students have not finished high school, and most usually need financial aid. Many of these students have stated they consider the nursing field their last hope for career success.

While the VRJC nursing program has always has this high success rate, the academic basic skills of these students has declined just as those of the average student nationwide. It has been found that the extra help available in the Reading lab is needed for some students if earlier success levels are to be maintained. The reading course has assisted in maintaining previous high success levels.

Success Factors

For the students who take the reading course, the year-long nursing program has been enhanced by learning those concepts necessary for academic success. There have been several factors that have contributed to the success of the program and could be applied to other areas:

1) Academic and vocational instructors working together is highly stressed.

2) The Nursing Director needs to impress upon prospective students the benefits that can result from taking a Reading course,

3) The Reading Instructor has to be willing to teach irregular hours, put in long periods of preparation, have a great deal of patience, be willing to work with the non-traditional student, like people and accept them as they are,

4) Instructional deans need to be flexible enough to support this type of curriculum,

5) The fall of 1979 saw another reading class added during the regular semester for those students who had not taken the preliminary course or desired additional help. This group was so motivated they gave up most of their lunch hour to take the class!

6) Students constantly vocalize their support of a skills class geared for nursing students. Words cannot express the happiness a nursing career has given these people,

7) It is possible for any student to sign up for a reading class at VRJC, nursing major or not. If there are non-nursing students present, it is the creative instructor that will insure that the diverse needs of each student are met,

8) Textbooks and other materials do correspond closely with the texts used in the nursing program in order to eliminate confusion and reduce financial costs,

9) The program has proven to be very beneficial to the nursing and reading departments because students have a better chance for a productive career,

10) A tutorial assistance program implemented in the spring of 1980 has provided additional assistance. There is no fee for the tutor or materials. The tutorial program reinforces classroom instruction. Students are given the opportunity to review material and prepare for upcoming examinations. The tutor needs to possess expertise in the LVN curriculum. Eleven LVN students have availed themselves of the program in the first semester of operation.

Any college can do what is being done at Vernon Regional Junior College. There is enough evidence to suggest that if developmental classes are offered to people who may not have the most recent or extensive academic background, a higher retention figure is maintained in an intense rigorous program such as Vocational Nursing if reading study skills are taught.

1981 Update
By Frank Grima

The growth of the nursing programs have paralled the growth and prosperity of Vernon Regional Junior College. Some innovations and reviews have occurred since the earlier article was written. In 1980, the main campus inaugurated an eighteen months evening nursing program in addition to the normal twelve months program. This has allowed working students the opportunity to be employed during the day and still attend classes at night, four nights a week, four hours each night. The evening schedule also permits mothers not employed outside the home the opportunity to complete the program and further their education. The Medical Terminology course has been added to the permanent nursing curriculum at Vernon and Crowell. A similar type of curriculum could easily be added to the Wichita Falls curriculum. Starting with the fall, 1981 semester, I shall be Coordinator of Tutorial Services for all college programs. The ability to know and work well with the various directors in Wichita Falls will enable me to easily implement assistance programs to those students in need of academic remediation.

Overtures were extended to ascertain if the Wichita Falls nursing programs desired a terminology course or other type of tutorial activity. In December of 1980, I was appointed Coordinator of Instructional Services at the North Texas Skills Center in Wichita Falls. In addition to my on-campus teaching, I was in Wichita Falls from three to five days a week. This afforded me ample opportunity to visit each center and meet the other directors and contribute whatever I could to upgrade instructional services wherever feasible. The nursing classes at Bethania Hospital are attempting to accomodate large number of students. New materials and more equipment are being added to the library. The nursing

students at Wichita General Hospital are fewer in number than those at Bethania and use the facilities at the Carrigan Center, owned and operated by the Wichita Falls Independent School District. The Senior Texan Employment Program (STEP), a division of the Department of Labor, has granted the college six tutorial positions in Wichita Falls. This sounds like an excellent program to employ the qualified elderly. As of this writing nobody meeting the academic and financial guidelines has been hired.

Materials and textbooks are constantly being revised and updated in order to present the most effective lectures and slide presentations possible. A course review in preparation of State Boards has also been inaugurated. A syllabus has been printed, allowing for eighteen or thirty-six curriculums. The flexibility of the various nursing programs has continued. Upgrading of curriculums, integrating new textbooks and the additional use of audio-visual materials have all proved educational benefits to each program. All of these factors have resulted in top-rated programs throughtout the district and student nurses who are prepared not only to pass State Boards, but have the experience, training, caring and feeling to become human nurses. If additional information is needed about the nursing programs at Vernon Regional Junior College, please contact Frank Grima at the college in Vernon, Texas 76384. The appendices include:

1) A Medical Terminology Syllabus
2) Course requirements of the LVN courses at Vernon Regional Junior College.

VERNON REGIONAL JUNIOR COLLEGE

VOCATIONAL NURSING 114

MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY

SYLLABUS

VN 114 - MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is designed to teach students anatomic word roots, Greek and Latin derivatives and those prefixes and suffixes essential for anyone planning to make the medical profession a career. Instructional techniques may include structured exercises, self-assessment instruments and films.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1) Spell, pronounce and know the definition of medical terms.

2) Be able to break down components of medical terms in order to understand lectures on anatomy, diseases, tumors, surgical procedures, etc.

3) Be able to understand and transcribe medical records.

III. TEXTBOOKS:

1) Fisher, J. Patrick, Basic Medical Terminology

2) Young and Austin, Medical Terminology (supplementary)

IV. SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS: Selected and pertinent audio-visual aids

V. TIME SCHEDULE:

1st Week:	Introduction to course. Review pronunciation. Discuss prefixes and suffixes.
2nd Week:	Latin and Greek roots
3rd Week:	Cells, organs and structures of the body
4th Week:	Circulatory anatomy
5th Week:	Lymphatic anatomy
6th Week:	Skeletal muscular anatomy
7th-8th Week:	Muscular system anatomy
9th Week:	Respiratory system anatomy
10th Week:	Integumentary system anatomy
11th Week:	Endocrine system anatomy
12th Week:	Gastrointestinal tract anatomy
13th Week:	Nervous system anatomy
14th Week:	Genitourinary tract anatomy
15th Week;	Course review
16th Week:	Final examination

VI. EXAMINATIONS: Periodic quizzes shall be given at the discretion of the instructor. A final examination is required.

VII. ATTENDANCE POLICY: Attendance is essential to maintain progress. Attendance will adhere to college and nursing department regulations.

VIII. CRADING PROCEDURES: Grades are based on attendance, class participation work books, quizzes and the final examination based on the following:

Attendance	-	10%	A = 90 - 100%
Participation	-	15%	B = 80 - 89%
Work Books	-	20%	C = 70 - 79%
Quizzes	-	35%	D = 60 - 69%
Final Exam	-	20%	F = 0 - 59%

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CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

Vocational Nursing*

Vernon Regional Junior College operates four vocational nursing programs. They are the Bethania School of Vocational Nursing and the Wichita General School of Vocational Nursing in Wichita Falls, the Greenbelt School of Vocational Nursing in Crowell and the Vernon Campus program.

Completion of the prescribed curriculum with (1) acceptable academic performance, (2) safe and competent clinical skills (3) recommendation of the Director of the School, and (4) submission of proper application entitles the graduate to write the examination of the State Board of Texas Vocational Nurse Examiners for licensure (L.V.N.)

Additional information concerning these programs may be obtained by writing the Director, Bethania School of Vocational Nursing, Wichita Falls, Texas 76301; Director, Wichita General School of Vocational Nursing, 1609 Blonde Street, Wichita Falls, Texas 76301; or Director, Nursing Programs, Vernon Regional Junior College. All programs follow the curriculum as prescribed by the State Board of Vocational Nurse Examiners and the Texas Education Agency.

CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Locations — Vernon Campus, Greenbelt School of Vocational Nursing, Bethania School of Vocational Nursing, Wichita General School of Vocational Nursing

Probable Completion Time — 1 year

V.N.	101	Personal and Vocational Adjustments	15 Clock Hours
V.N.	102	Mental Health and Mental Illness	27 Clock Hours
V.N.	103	Disease Control and Prevention	12 Clock Hours
V.N.	104	First Aid	15 Clock Hours
V.N.	105	Vocational Nursing Skills	177 Clock Hours
V.N.	106	Pharmacology	51 Clock Hours
V.N.	107	Nutrition	30 Clock Hours
V.N.	108	Anatomy	60 Clock Hours
V.N.	109	Normal Growth and Development and Geriatrics	31 Clock Hours
V.N.	110	Medical-Surgical Nursing	110 Clock Hours
V.N.	111	Maternity and Infant Nursing	51 Clock Hours
V.N.	112	Pediatrics	25 Clock Hours
V.N.	113	Clinical Nursing	1,296 Clock Hours
			1,900 Clock Hours

*Interested individuals should note that course credit is recorded in clock hours, not semester hours.